

the foothills of the Catalinas. I have observed it here on only two occasions. Rather common, especially in early spring, about Tucson. Mr. Brown found it commonly in the Quijitoa country in the winter of 1884 and 1885. I did not observe it at either Florence or at Riverside.

173. *Habia melanocephala*. BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK. — At Mineral Creek, altitude 5000 feet, this species was breeding in small numbers during the summer of 1882. The only other point where I have met with it is in the Catalina Mountains, where it undoubtedly breeds at the highest altitudes, and where after the first of July it rapidly becomes abundant as low down as 3500 feet. Here I found it in large scattered flocks, during July, August, and September, 1884, feeding on all the small wild fruits and seeds that are abundant at this time of year. Its arrival at this same locality was first noted May 1, and it remains till about the first week in October.

I took a remarkably fine albino of this species on August 15, 1884, in Pepper Sauce Cañon, Catalina Mountains.

174. *Guiraca cærulea*. BLUE GROSBEAK. — The only records I have of this species are kindly furnished me by Mr. Brown, who finds it rather rare about Tucson late in May and early in June.

175. *Passerina amœna*. LAZULI BUNTING. — Observed at Mineral Creek in August, 1882. Took a young male (No. 624) in Pepper Sauce Cañon (4500 feet), July 27, 1884. These are the only records I have made of the species. Mr. Brown has found it breeding, but not common, about Tucson, where it is most frequent during the spring migration.

176. *Spiza americana*. DICKCISSEL. — The only record of this species is furnished by Mr. Herbert Brown, who took a female near Tucson on September 11, 1884, and later kindly showed me the bird in his collection.

177. *Calamospiza melanocorys*. LARK BUNTING. This species, if it does not breed within the area under consideration, is present almost the entire year and sometimes is to be met with in enormous flocks. I find in my notes large flocks noted near Florence, Dec. 10-20, 1883. On the mesa, above Pepper Sauce Cañon, Catalinas (altitude 4000 feet), I saw Aug. 17, 1885, two large flocks, composed of adult and young in about equal numbers, the adult males still in full plumage. A small flock was seen in Old Hat Cañon, Catalinas (4000 feet), on March 10, 1885 — first of the spring migration. A number of large flocks were noted on the plains about Tucson, Feb. 19, 1886.

(To be continued.)

RARE BIRDS OF NORTHEASTERN NEW BRUNSWICK.

BY PHILIP COX, JR.

BEFORE entering upon the subject of this paper, it is well to say something concerning the character and climate of this cor-

ner of the Dominion (Newcastle on the Miramichi River), as the reader will then be better able to appreciate the facts presented.

Snow falls here about November 1, and winter can be said to begin about the 20th of the month. Soon pond, lake, and river are ice-bound, and field and forest clad in their winter robes. The snowfall increases until about the middle of March, when it lies to the depth of from three to six feet; and during all this time the thermometer is hardly ever above zero. A temperature of from 15° to 30° below is often reached, and for weeks and weeks the average may be 18° ; but, strange to say, our climate does not *seem* severe, nor do our people complain of the cold. This is largely due to the surprising dryness of the air, and the absence of raw winds. Our days are bright, our nights, starry; the auroral displays are of surpassing grandeur, while the remarkable uniformity of the temperature is not the least striking feature of our climate.

About the 20th of March, the sun's increasing power begins to be felt, and the snow would henceforth waste away rapidly were it not for cold east winds which at this time begin to blow from off the floating ice-fields of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and neutralize the action of the sun. Thus spring creeps on very slowly, or rather we have no spring at all, in the general meaning of the term; for it is frequently the 1st of May before our fields are bare, and then warm summer is upon us. Thus summer and winter meet, as it were, on friendly terms, shake hands, and get along tolerably well without the interference of a meddling third person. By the side of some ice-layer or snow-drift, the Mayflower, trillium, and other plants are often found in bloom, marking the sudden transition of climate.

In this latitude a cold winter generally presupposes a warm summer, but luckily for our country we are an exception to this rule; for no other locality, perhaps, in the Dominion of Canada can boast of such cool, refreshing weather as the shores of the Miramichi and far-famed Baie des Chaleurs. Of this fact our neighbors to the south and west are becoming aware; for thousands of them flock every summer to our little towns and villages to enjoy the delicious coolness and health luxuries of our seaside homes. And what visions of pleasure and happiness must they fondly recall after such a visit! Bright, sunny days, tem-

pered by gentle sea breezes, sweet, fresh and cool, like the fanning of unseen wings; a sun, wondrously large and red, rising from behind the sea, and as if cooled by its morning bath, lacking all day its usual "ardent frown"; a sky unflecked with a cloud by day, and deeply blue by night, studded all over with twinkling stars; the mellowed whiteness of a moon soaring high through an azure canopy, flooding meadow and forest with her silvery beams, or lighting up the breeze-rippled surface of the sea in long flickering lanes, like fairy paths leading to dreamland; a distant mountain rearing its huge form higher and higher from out the softened shades of night and anxious to catch the first glimpse of returning day; a health-laden breeze from the sea meeting a warmer one from the land and mingling its purity and strength with the odor of flowers from lawn, meadow, and forest; the waves at their feet murmuring the mysterious soul-language of eternity, and blending with the equally plaintive rustling of leaves overhead; who that has once seen, felt, and enjoyed all this will not yearn for it again?

Here, too, come students of nature to investigate her vigorous northern life—her handiwork in sea and air, lake and river, mountain and valley. The botanist finds a rich, interesting field, for in addition to the varied flora of forest, plain, and shore, he can fairly revel at ebb tide in a comparatively unexplored world of sea-ferns and Algæ. Bay and river, too, teem with fish, from the lordly salmon to the quaint, delicate sea-needle; and molluscan life in myriad forms inhabits the sea-bottom, or in death yields to the waves palaces of pearl to be strewn on the sand beaches—a gift of beauty from the lovely unseen.

It is with the bird life, however, that I and the readers of 'The Auk' are most concerned. Over this region an immense bird-wave rolls twice every year; now harbingers of sweet songs, rippling waters, and flowery banks; then forerunners of winter's icy reign. The varied character of surface makes it a favorite resting ground and breeding place of very many species. On all sides are extensive forests of evergreens; while sloping hills, clad with deciduous trees, marsh and upland, swamp and meadow, mud flats and sandy shore, resound with the rustling of wings, shrill piping notes, or sweet warbling songs.

During the migration the broad, shallow lagoons of the Miramichi Bay, protected from the disturbing winds and waves o

the ocean by long winding sand bars, or 'beaches,' swarm with Geese, Brant, Ducks, Cormorants, Gulls, Terns, etc., converting this locality into the finest shooting ground to be found anywhere on the Atlantic coast of America, where hundreds of sporting gentlemen resort every year. Moreover, an additional charm attaches to it as an observing station because of its proximity to the Baie des Chaleurs, the generally accepted northern *coast* limit of the Canadian Fauna, and many interesting problems in ornithology, respecting the range of several species, may be worked out in this section.

Having premised so much, I will now proceed to deal with the subject of this sketch.

About the 10th of January, 1884, some farmers in the neighborhood of Nequac, an Acadian village on the northern shore of Miramichi Bay, observed what they took to be a stray Turkey, feeding almost daily around their houses and farmyards. Thinking it belonged to some villager, they did not molest it. It was remarked, however, that the bird did not roost at night about the outbuildings; it generally disappeared at sunset, no one knew whither; but early next morning it would be found industriously turning over refuse and manure, apparently as tame and confiding as an ordinary domestic fowl. It would permit a person to approach within six or eight feet before seeming to notice his presence; then it would flutter to the nearest post, returning to the ground almost immediately. Its decided preference for garbage became at length the subject of discussion in the neighborhood, and several, among whom was Mr. Ruben Vienneau, began to grow skeptical about the stranger's genus. It was pointed out, however, that the Turkey had a well known weakness for flesh food, and was not particularly exact, sometimes, about the quality either; but Mr. Vienneau, having witnessed some of the stranger's wondrous gastronomic feats in swallowing wholesale large quantities of disgusting offal, refused to be converted from the apparent error of his ways. He continued to watch its movements and habits with mere suspicious eyes. The hooked beak, long middle toe, and absence of the noisy 'gobble' were all noted and discussed, and finally the bird began to lose caste. Many plans were taken to effect its capture, but in vain. 'Childlike and bland' when feeding, even stupidly indifferent sometimes, it seemed capable, however, of exercising a surprising

amount of caution ; and no efforts or devices of its enemies could induce it to enter trap, cage, or barn. A crisis at length arrived. A sheep had died a few days before, and on January 29, Mr. Vienneau descried the 'Turkey' on the carcass, feeding on the entrails. This was the last straw that broke the back of his tottering faith. "C'est l'oiseau du diable," exclaimed the excited Frenchman, as he seized a gun and shot the impostor dead.

Through the timely thoughtfulness of Mr. Anthony Adams, merchant of Nequac, the bird was sent to John Nevins, Esq., police magistrate of the town. Justice Nevins takes a lively interest in ornithology, and has one of the finest private collections in New Brunswick. It proved to be a veritable Turkey Buzzard (*Cathartes aura*), and Mr. Vienneau's "l'oiseau du diable" now occupies a prominent place in that gentleman's cabinet.

Towards the middle of last September, I was astonished at learning that another Turkey Buzzard had been captured by Mr. David Savoy, of Black Brook, one of the numerous lumber-milling villages on the estuary of the Miramichi, and about twenty miles in a direct line from Nequac. The bird was, when I saw it, on exhibition in Chatham, a small town, situated about half-way between Newcastle and Black Brook. Mr. Savoy described the manner of its capture ; how he had hung up a salmon net to dry, and the bird had in some way become entangled in it. It was very wild he said, when first taken, but in three weeks a great change had come over it ; for when I saw the bird, it was feeding in a yard with ordinary poultry, which took no more notice of its presence than they did of one of themselves. I noticed, too, that the sight of one eye had been destroyed, and the ball was withered and sunken.

Its domestication seemed largely due to food alone ; for, as observed above, the creature was wild when first captured, but upon being fed grew remarkably docile, and made no further attempt to escape. When describing its manner of eating, especially the first meal, Mr. Savoy ruefully shook his head. That was enough. If the creature had to be fed on meat, it must be got rid of ; as long as he kept it, he had a veritable white elephant on his hands. One day he observed it greedily devouring some unsavory garbage. He was horrified, but smiled as a thought of relief came to him ; the butcher's slaughter-house was at hand, and immediately Buzzard stock took a boom. Even after stuff-

ing itself with offal, it would feed indiscriminately on the grain, potatoes, etc., cast to the barn-yard fowls, seemingly never satisfied.

I saw it also by night, perched a few feet above a stable floor; and in the presence of a lamp it acted very much like an ordinary fowl, except that it manifested a desire to hide its head from the glare of the light. During the whole period of its captivity, extending over three weeks, the bird made, it would seem, no attempt to fly; and this fact, added to its apparent stupidity, inclined me to believe that it had received some injury. I purchased it from the owner, who killed and sent it to me. Upon skinning the specimen, I discovered the cause of the blindness, for a small shot, probably a No. 6, was found imbedded under the edge of the iris of the withered ball. The pellet was encysted, and very much oxydized, showing it had been lodged there some time. Moreover, two similar pellets were detected, one under the skin on the left side, the other on the arm of the left wing; while the arm of the right wing had lately been pierced by a large shot, ploughing the muscle open and passing through the fleshy part of the shoulder, forming an ugly wound. The surrounding parts were very much discolored and inflamed. Such an injury must certainly have destroyed the bird's power of flight, and accounts, to a certain extent, for its apparently rapid domestication, and the aversion it showed to flying, but does not bear out the alleged manner in which it was captured.

This poor creature had evidently had a rough experience. Its was the checkered career of a tramp Ishmaelite, with every man's gun against it; and we cannot help regretting that its flight to these boreal regions to escape its southern tormentors, resulted so fatally to itself.

I am also informed by a gentleman who saw the bird after it was killed, that a Turkey Buzzard was shot five years ago in the vicinity of Kingston, Kent Co., about forty miles southeast of this town, and near the seashore.

The only other records known to me of their occurrence in northern localities, along the Atlantic sea-board are those of two taken in Massachusetts in 1863, and one reported from St. Stephen by Mr. Boardman, date not given. Nequac and Black Brook are, however, two hundred miles north of St. Stephen, and the difference in average summer temperature is even greater than would

be inferred from the difference of latitude; for the latter place is within the influence of the warm Bay of Fundy waters, whereas the former are upon a coast washed by colder Arctic currents. Why this species should be found here more frequently than to the south of us is an interesting problem for ornithologists. I cannot suggest an explanation. The common food supply seems neither more inviting nor abundant. Our coasts, it is true, abound more in fish, and maritime garbage would likely be more plentiful, but I am not sure that these birds show any marked predilection for this kind of diet.

On the fifth of last April, I was walking on the railroad track, in the vicinity of the town, shortly before sunset, when I came across three birds which were entire strangers to me. They were feeding at the time on the side of an embankment that, owing to its southern aspect, was already bare of snow; and as they flitted to the ground and returned to the telegraph wires, their blue backs and wings flashed brilliantly in the rays of the setting sun, causing me to think at first of the Jay; but no, these pretty strangers were but half his size. Fearing to approach too closely, lest they might take flight, I attempted to observe them for some time at a distance; but not having my field-glass, it was very unsatisfactory, besides curiosity kept urging me nearer and nearer. Presently, and to my great relief, it dawned on my mind they were paying very little, if any, attention to me, being wholly intent on foraging; and thus I was enabled to approach within a few yards, whence I made out more clearly the color of the plumage. Judge of my feelings of astonishment and incredulity, when their general characteristics suggested *Sialia sialis*—the Eastern Blue Bird, which I had merely read of, but had never seen. Impossible! Up in this cold dreary north on the fifth of April, with the whole country, field and forest, covered with a mantle of snow three feet thick! Surely I must be snow or color blind! Look again. Observe their rapid, but graceful descent, the accuracy with which they drop on their prey, and their almost immediate return. How quietly and still they sit on their perch, until some moving object attracts their attention; how familiar and confiding: they do not seem to notice my presence at all. If they are apprehensive of danger, and move off a little, the distrust is concealed under the appearance of business, seemingly making a longer flight to

pounce upon some insect. O yes, there can be no mistake about the birds' identity, those bright blue backs, wings, and tails, the reddish-brown breasts, the quiet demeanor, the feeding habits, all belong to but one, the Blue Bird; but will not the identification be discredited by professional ornithologists, since it was the work of an amateur? As far as I knew the species had never been reported farther north than the vicinity of St. John, and but rarely from there: Newcastle, however, was 150 miles from St. John, and almost directly north. These seemed to me strong reasons for taking one, but alas; I had no gun.

By this time the sun had set. The air began to grow chilly; my interesting companions ceased feeding, and commenced chirping to one another, as if discussing, what next? Presently a decision was reached; for the three rose on the wing, and were soon lost in the gathering shades of the dark pine forest.

The gray dawn of the morrow found me, gun in hand, hastening over the strong crust field, across which even a Goliath could have strode in safety. Everywhere silence reigned, disturbed only by the hard snow crunching under my feet, and echoing from the nearest pine clad hills.

The dark green of the woods had, during night, given place to a silvery covering of frost which transformed the whole forest into a mass resembling a great white cloud, thrown against the horizon of a blue sky. From the early chimney tops, columns of pale smoke were rising into the still morning air, so tall and graceful and white as to seem like delicate marble pillars supporting the arched dome overhead. But that which claimed most of my attention, and filled me with alternate hope and fear, was, shall I see again my feathered visitors of the evening before? When I reached their feeding ground nothing was to be seen. I waited long and anxiously. Presently the sun rose large and red, and shook his brilliant rays in profusion over the snowy landscape. Soon the whole forest was aglow, flashing and sparkling as if set with a million gems, but, like some fond dream or hope of the young heart, it soon vanished, leaving nothing except the dull reality. In a few minutes the hardy Crossbills ventured forth from their night retreat, and with sharpened appetites, began breakfasting on the cones, whispering to one another all the time. A Pine Grosbeak and Purple Finch, a solitary

Robin, and an occasional Jay added in turn their voices to wake up the slumbers of bird life.

That blue flash! What is it? Yes, there are the three pretty objects of my curiosity, perched on the telegraph wires where I last saw them, as quiet and easy of manner, as confiding and thoughtless of danger, and even more beautiful than on the evening before. I had killed hundreds of birds in my life: I had never felt such an absorbing interest in one before; yet on no occasion did I ever raise my gun with so much reluctance to take a life. And when at length I held in my hand a beautiful lifeless form, heard its two little friends, companions of its long journey and dreary nights, whispering to one another, methought, in mournful tones; when I saw them rise in the air, uttering a loud shrill note that sounded in my guilty ears like the curse of betrayed innocence, and fly away never to be seen by me again, my heart grew heavy, and I almost cursed that professional incredulity which drives an amateur into acts of needless cruelty. And even now as I raise my eyes from the paper, and look upon the graceful form, perched on a tiny stand, ornamented more than usual as if to make some restitution for the destruction of its life, the motionless presence recalls the events of that sunny April morning, and stirs anew the feeling of regret and pain.

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF SOME OF THE BIRD ROOKERIES OF THE GULF COAST OF FLORIDA.

BY W. E. D. SCOTT.

Second Paper.

SATURDAY, May 8. We were up and away early. Sailed out of the Nyakka River and along the northwest shores of Charlotte Harbor as far as Cape Haze; saw very few birds, and those only the commoner species.

From Cape Haze we crossed the harbor to the mouth of Matlacha Pass, the wind blowing almost a gale from the west.